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Bush Budget Squanders Chance to Put Americans to Work

Badly Shortchanges Transportation System

Washington, D.C. — President Bush's Fiscal Year 2005 budget proposal released today squanders key opportunities to put Americans back to work and rebuild America's transportation system, this according to Edward Wytkind, President of the national AFL-CIO's Transportation Trades Department.

"This budget is all talk, no action when it comes to meeting the transportation needs of our country," said Wytkind. "Instead of fixing crumbling roads and bridges, improving and expanding public transit and Amtrak, and making air travel safer and more efficient, President Bush has put forward a budget blueprint that is heavy on rhetoric but light on accomplishment."

Studies show that for every \$1 billion spent on infrastructure, 47,000 jobs are created. But under the six-year \$256 billion proposal for highway and transit spending unveiled in the President's Budget, 5.6 million fewer workers would land good jobs than under leading bipartisan proposals in Congress. "That's almost twice the number of jobs Americans have lost since January 2001."

While the President's Budget would continue a "30 year starvation of Amtrak," Wytkind added, it also "plays politics with the future of Amtrak and its 20,000 workers by holding 25 percent of Amtrak's funding hostage to senseless reforms that have found little support in Washington or in the states."

The Bush Administration has pushed legislative reforms that are tantamount to eliminating service to hundreds of cities, slashing thousands of jobs, selling-off key routes to special interests, and passing on to the nation's Governors — who already are

managing through unprecedented state budget crises – the burden of paying a greater share for Amtrak service.

And at a time when several major airports including Chicago's O'Hare are seeing a return to delay and congestion, the White House is proposing a 15 percent cut in Federal Aviation Administration programs that support much needed air traffic control system modernization. This budget-slashing effort comes on the heels of a recent announcement by the FAA Administrator that the agency plans to blatantly ignore its obligation to bargain over new contracts with employees and their unions in an attempt to unilaterally impose new agreements on the workers.

"Irresponsible White House budget-cutting of aviation programs combined with FAA mismanagement of its employee relations will deal a severe setback to the airline industry's post-September 11 recovery. Airline passengers expect better than this from their government."

TTD represents 35 member unions in the aviation, rail, transit, trucking, highway, longshore, maritime and related industries. For more information, visit www.ttd.org
